

CRISIS IN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE:
ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS

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(II)

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, D.C., March 4, 1982.

The Honorable CHARLES H. PERCY,
*Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Through its thirty-three year history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has encountered and overcome numerous problems described as "crises," and it now seems apparent that the alliance has entered another such period of strain. In recent years, we and our West European allies have experienced particular difficulties in coordinating our approaches to East-West relations. Differences have arisen over the Western response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the fate of the SALT II Treaty, deployment of new nuclear weapons in Europe, the imposition of martial law in Poland, and the planned Siberian-European pipeline. Indeed, so serious have become the tensions and frustrations that some in Congress are questioning one of the key elements of American participation in NATO—the stationing of over 300,000 U.S. troops in Western Europe.

It has been a commonplace during NATO's history to suggest that differences among the allies could be resolved by more thorough consultations or by more effective American leadership. While both factors are obviously important, it is clear that consultations and firm declarations cannot mask fundamental differences. Ultimately, cohesion depends on whether common ground can be found on basic questions of policy.

In recent years, I believe, Americans have not always taken full account of all factors influencing European approaches to alliance issues. We have in fact, from time to time, based U.S. policies and pronouncements on highly inaccurate images of allied concerns. Conversely, our European allies have not always fully understood certain basic factors motivating Americans actions. Unfortunately, events have created exaggerated images in both European and American public opinion that could, if allowed to stand, seriously undermine the alliance.

In the conviction that a healthy alliance relationship remains vital to U.S. interests, I called upon the Congressional Research Service to analyze the sources of differing United States and European approaches to East-West relations and the implications for NATO's future. This analysis, by Stanley R. Sloan, Specialist in U.S. Alliance Relations, provides timely insights valuable to every Member of Congress concerned about the state of alliance relations. It approaches the issues in a balanced, non-partisan fashion and outlines the range of choices available to the United States. In the hope that this report will contribute to the current debate concerning the American commitment to NATO, I respectfully submit it for publication.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.,
*Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on European Affairs.*

ABSTRACT

The Atlantic Alliance is in a severe crisis which could lead to a reconsideration of fundamental commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on both sides of the Atlantic. A major source of the current crisis can be found in differing U.S. and European attitudes toward East-West relations. Many of these differences are profound and, in the short term, are not likely to be fundamentally altered. They can be accommodated within the framework of the alliance as have differences many times in the past. If a basis for accommodation among the allies is not found, the future of the alliance may be in question. The current alliance framework, which permits evolutionary developments but tends to discourage radical change, has the power of inertia behind it—with all its shortcomings, it has helped maintain East-West peace and internal Western stability. Some alternative American approaches to European security could produce savings for the United States or allow reallocation of limited resources to other defense requirements. Approaches such as withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe could, however, produce costs for U.S. interests vis à vis the Soviet Union and could be destabilizing within Europe. The question for policy makers is whether the risks of alternative approaches are worth the potential benefits.

CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of transmittal.....	III
Abstract.....	V
Summary and conclusions.....	1
Introduction.....	7
Sources of differing attitudes.....	9
Geography: We are here, and they are there.....	9
History has taught us different lessons.....	11
Ideology: A mixed heritage.....	14
Demography: A changing American profile.....	16
Global versus regional roles and capabilities.....	17
Economic factors, a continuing source of disagreement.....	19
Every nation a special case.....	21
Public opinion: A mirror of differing perceptions.....	25
The role and importance of public opinion.....	25
Current misperceptions.....	25
Trends and policy implications.....	26
Implications for the Alliance.....	30
Alternative analyses of the crisis.....	30
A new and profound crisis.....	30
The latest of a series of crises.....	31
Alternative futures for the Alliance.....	32
Reassertion of American preeminence.....	33
Continuity.....	33
Rearrangement of relationships.....	34
Independent Europe, allied to United States.....	34
Independent Europe, tending toward neutralism.....	34
Fragmented Europe, susceptible to Soviet pressure.....	35
Fragmented Europe, subordinated to Soviet interests.....	35
Major variables and uncertainties.....	36
Options for the Congress.....	37
Sources of congressional influence and power.....	37
Major options regarding U.S. troops in Europe.....	38
Maintain current levels.....	39
Gradual withdrawal.....	39
Rapid withdrawal.....	39
An uncertain future.....	40

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Atlantic Alliance is without question in the midst of the most severe crisis it has faced for many years. The beginning of the crisis can perhaps be traced back to events that occurred during the Carter Administration—indecision regarding deployment of enhanced radiation warheads in Europe, differing interpretations of how to respond to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the failure of SALT II, and the evolution of American nuclear strategy toward more flexible options. The first year of the Reagan Administration has witnessed the deepening of the crisis with events and policies aggravating United States-European differences over nuclear issues, the role of arms control, and how to respond to the crisis in Poland. These issues, combined with the ever-present question of defense burden sharing in the Alliance, have led some Members of Congress to question the U.S. commitment to NATO.

To some extent, the Western crisis can be attributed to short term policy choices, leadership failures on both sides of the Atlantic, and other problems that are more or less variable over time. But the roots of the crisis are more profound.

A major source of the crisis can be found in differing U.S. and European attitudes toward East-West relations. Many of these differences are not new; they have been part of the dynamic of alliance relations since NATO was founded. In fact, part of the success of the Alliance over the years has been the ability of the allies to accommodate their differences over East-West relations within a political framework that permits coordinated action. That framework, the essence of which is captured by a combination of "defense and détente" policies, now has fallen into disrepair.

The question is whether, under today's conditions, the alliance will be able to accommodate U.S. and European differences in a way that rehabilitates NATO's role as the coordinating mechanism for Western security policies. The answer will depend in part on how well the United States and the allies understand the factors that lead to policy and perceptual differences. Any new consensus which fails to acknowledge that there are fundamental differences will be doomed to obsolescence before it is incorporated in NATO communiqués or blessed by summit declarations.

Geography.—Perhaps some most basic differences can be traced to the fact that "we are here and they are there." Most Americans presume that the minimal physical distance between European countries and the Soviet Union should lead to greater European concern about the "threat." The fact is that Western Europe's proximity to Soviet power makes Europeans particularly concerned about the consequences of war, and therefore particularly determined to avoid them. For

Americans, the European "theater" can be separated, at least intellectually, from their homeland; for Europeans, the homeland is the potential battlefield.

History.—The influence of geography is reinforced by differing historical experiences. Europeans have hosted two devastating wars in the last 65 years, and are therefore preoccupied by the desire to avoid war. Americans also want to avoid war. But no major hostilities have been fought on American soil since our Civil War and we see our involvement in World War I and II as having been required by European inability to deal effectively with threats to peace. We tend to see the current European attitude as weak-kneed; Europeans see our attitude as careless.

History may also help explain why there is a greater willingness in Europe to choose the "red" side of the simplistic "red or dead" dichotomy. Occupation or subjugation by domestic authoritarian regimes is not part of the American experience—most Americans find the prospect particularly horrendous. Most continental European countries have been occupied by foreign powers or subjugated by domestic authoritarian regimes. Europe's current political freedom and relative economic well-being tells Europeans that a condition of occupation or subjugation is not necessarily permanent; that resistance and recovery are possible, while death is quite permanent.

Ideology.—In spite of a wide area of shared ideological commitments, recognized in the North Atlantic Treaty, there are fundamental differences between the European and American ideological experiences. The Marxist critique of capitalism has deep roots in Europe. All European countries have social programs more extensive than those in the United States. Many Europeans regard the ideals of Marxism as a source of inspiration even if they reject the systems that have been spawned by the Soviet revolution.

To Americans, the Soviet Union embodies the primary external ideological challenge to the American system. Because the threat is most unambiguously an external one, the confrontation between the two systems is generally seen as occurring in other countries, in Europe and in the third world. The perspective from Europe is somewhat different. Germany, in particular, on the front Western lines toward the East, regards the success of its social and economic system as a vital component of German security policy. Therefore, tradeoffs between defense spending and social programs pose far more difficult choices for Germany than for the United States.

And, there is a West-West ideological dimension. In the early days of the NATO alliance, the United States was regarded by many Europeans as a model political system. Now, many West Europeans perceive their system of society and government as superior or at least equal to that of the United States. A certain degree of greater self confidence inevitably leads Europeans to think that policies based on their assessment of national and Western interests are at least as valid as those recommended by the United States.

Demography may also be working slowly against U.S.-European understanding on security policy requirements. Immigration trends have reduced in relative terms the European contribution to the American melting pot and increased the Latin American and Asian contri-

bution. These trends are already being used by some observers to argue that American interests and commitments should be redirected away from Europe.

Differing global roles and military capabilities also produce U.S.-European disagreements on East-West relations. The decline since the Second World War in Europe's ability to affect developments in Third World nations was accompanied by an evolving strategic approach to instability in Third World. European policies came increasingly to depend on political and economic instruments to influence events in the Third World.

The Europeans reject what they see as an occasional American tendency to concentrate too narrowly on military responses to potential or actual Soviet challenges. They are at least equally—if not more—interested in developing economic ties and political bonds that will both ensure cooperative relations with third world nations and discourage Soviet adventurism.

Fruits of détente.—Europe has gained far more in tangible benefits, some of utmost importance, than has the United States from the period of détente. This fact makes Europeans more inclined to regard détente as “divisible,” to protect the gains of détente in Europe. The United States, carrying the majority of Western global military burdens, has a much greater interest in treating détente as “indivisible,” with Soviet actions outside of Europe seen as providing cause for Western response within the European framework.

Economics.—It is a popular American belief that European attitudes toward East-West relations are driven to a significant degree by avarice—greed for the fruits of expanded trade with the East. It is a popular European retort that American practice does not match its rhetoric when real American economic interests are called into question.

On balance, Europe does have more to lose than does the United States in terms of content from disruption of trade with the East. The United States is not heavily dependent on trade with the East, nor does it count on growth in that trade as a vital component of its economic growth. West European trade with the East involves mutual dependencies, and whether the ultimate balance favors East or West is a matter for debate. To many Europeans, the risks are worth taking. The cost/benefit relationship does not look nearly as favorable from an American perspective.

Specific national perspectives.—West Germany's approach to East-West relations is very much a product of the division of the German nation, the vulnerability of Berlin, and the legal and psychological limits on Germany's military capabilities. A policy of strict confrontation with the East would entail far higher human and financial costs for West Germany than for the United States. France sees for itself a special role as the leader of Western Europe in relations with the East. French governments since de Gaulle have protected carefully France's freedom of movement in policies toward the East. But France also has acted as a European “balancer,” demonstrating independence of the United States when Germany seemed dominated by American policy and power and, now, increasing its criticism of the Soviet Union to balance Germany's more independent role between the two super-powers.

The recent differences between the United States and the European allies over sanctions against the Soviet Union and Poland illustrate a number of the profound differences between American and European perspectives. Geography makes Europeans far more concerned than Americans about the possibility that instability in Poland could turn into a continental military confrontation. The Europeans may therefore place a higher value on internal stability in Poland. History reinforces this concern, and also inclines West Europeans to believe that the Polish "renewal" has a chance of resuming so long as there is no direct Soviet intervention.

Furthermore, differing economic stakes create different perspectives on sanctions against the Soviet Union. West European nations have much to lose and very little to gain from, for example, aborting the gas pipeline deal with the Soviet Union or declaring Poland in default. Given Europe's current economic recession, which many Europeans perceive as due in part to high U.S. interest rates, the gas pipeline deal means jobs now as well as energy later. Furthermore, while declaring Poland in default would constitute a strong signal against martial law, it would be West European, not American, banks which would suffer the consequences.

The recent prominence of nuclear issues in United States-European relations has also illustrated sources of divergent perceptions. Differing geographical locations and historical experiences produced different attitudes toward the prospect of nuclear war in Europe. More benign West European perspectives on the Soviet Union (seeing Moscow as motivated primarily by fear for its security rather than by dreams of conquest) also have led many Europeans to interpret differently recent improvements in Soviet theater nuclear force capabilities.

In the West European democracies as well as in the United States, foreign and defense policies are formulated with at least some regard to public opinion. Policy makers and legislators should therefore have available accurate information on public attitudes within the alliance.

American headlines have given the impression that neutralism, pacifism, and anti-Americanism are spreading across the continent. This impression is not confirmed by public opinion polls. Large majorities of Europeans "like" Americans. They want a strong but not belligerent America; they welcome strong U.S. leadership in the world. They remain, for the most part, committed to NATO. At the same time, they do not believe that dramatic increases in their defense spending would lessen the threat they face. And, they look for evidence that the United States is making a genuine attempt to reduce tensions and negotiate arms control agreements.

The currently-popular European image of Americans as bent on confrontation with the Soviet Union is also inaccurate. There *is* strong support in the United States for efforts to rebuild American military capabilities. Many Americans would feel more comfortable if the United States were superior to the Soviet Union. But most Americans would be willing to live with a condition of overall military parity. Large majorities of Americans want the United States to try to negotiate arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Americans would support the use of military force when vital American

interests are threatened, but there is a strong residue of opposition to any military involvement that even vaguely resembles the start of another Vietnam.

How serious is the current crisis? A number of analysts argue that NATO has outlived its usefulness; some contend that its strategy is outdated and irrelevant. But others argue that we are talking ourselves into a bigger crisis than is justified by events; NATO, for these analysts, still represents the best framework possible for preserving East-West peace and internal West European stability.

In any case, it appears that American objectives and policies in Europe will increasingly come under close scrutiny. This examination presumably will take place with reference to various concepts of the future of American involvement in European security arrangements.

No matter what policy objectives the United States selects, it seems unlikely that the alliance will move either toward a reassertion of American preponderance or, on the other extreme, fragmentation of Western Europe and subordination to the Soviet Union. The more likely range of possibilities lies somewhere in between.

Continuity with traditional American approaches to the alliance does not promise an early end to the expensive U.S. troop presence in Europe or an end to the frustrating process of coordinating policies with recalcitrant allies. Furthermore, the United States and Europe will likely continue to have different economic stakes in relations with the East, and therefore divergent attitudes toward the use of economic ties as weapons in East-West competition. Continuity does, however, narrow the range of uncertainty about the future and perhaps contains fewer risks than other alternative futures. Congress can support this approach to the alliance by continuing to support an active U.S. participation in European security arrangements and a substantial U.S. commitment to NATO which constitutes our entree to the European security game.

If one concludes that the alliance is not vital to American interests, an evolutionary approach may fail adequately to protect U.S. interests in the future. The Congress, through its ability to affect U.S. force levels and commitments, could mandate either a gradual or rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe. Such a move could permit the United States to save some money (if the withdrawn troops are disbanded) or reallocate defense resources to other commitments. It would be consistent with this approach to put aside any concern about European economic interests and, for example, to attempt unilaterally to block the gas pipeline deal with the Soviet Union or to declare Poland in default of its international financial obligations.

Such a break with traditional American approaches to the alliance promises more uncertainties than does an evolutionary approach. The Congress presumably would mandate such an approach only if it had decided, as some have argued, (1) that it makes little difference to U.S. interests whether or not Western Europe falls increasingly under Soviet influence; or (2) that the shock of a U.S. withdrawal would force the Europeans to organize a unified nuclear and conventional defense of Europe, allied to the United States.

The formation of a "United Europe" would, in theory, relieve the United States of some difficult burdens. U.S. policy since World

War II has encouraged European integration without trying to force the pace of the process. Would "shock treatment" finally convince the Europeans to overcome all the traditional obstacles to greater unity? How can the shock treatment be applied without guaranteeing European unity on terms that are potentially unfavorable to U.S. interests? Even if the Europeans decided that, in principle, they wanted to organize an independent defense in alliance with the United States, could they do it?

How great is the risk that the European nations, left more-or-less to organize their own defense, would be driven apart and into the arms of the Soviet Union? Are the benefits of disengagement from European defense worth the potential risks?

There are no certain answers to any of these questions. The answers ultimately lie in the realm of subjective judgment, and each analyst, official, Senator, and Representative must ultimately make his or her own best bet.

INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the Atlantic Alliance was thrown into disarray by a number of issues, many of which have their roots in differing approaches to East-West relations. What is the appropriate role of nuclear weapons in Alliance strategy? Is the United States planning on fighting a "limited nuclear war in Europe? In what ways can arms control enhance Western security, and what are the acceptable guidelines for arms control agreements? Have previous arms control initiatives failed to reduce the threat of war while undermining Western strength? Do the hundreds of thousands of protestors in European cities signal a new era of anti-American, neutralist sentiment in which American military forces will not only be unappreciated in Europe but also unwanted? How should the West respond to repression of reform in Poland? What are the dangers of growing West European dependence on Soviet energy sources, particularly natural gas? Can American officials continue to justify to a skeptical American electorate the costly American commitment to European defense?

In 1982, it is possible that the crisis in the alliance which was aggravated by these and other issues will inspire legislative attempts to readjust, or perhaps radically alter, the U.S. role in the NATO alliance. A reexamination by the U.S. Congress of the U.S. commitment to European defense would undoubtedly be contentious, and would inevitably produce additional tension within the alliance. Such a debate would, at present, be set against widespread American misunderstanding or misinterpretation of European attitudes toward East-West relations; it would be matched by an equally inadequate European understanding of American perceptions.

This report attempts to identify the *sources* of United States and European attitudes toward East-West relations. The premise of this analysis is that these sources of differing perceptions are profound, and to some extent immutable. Many of these differences have prevailed since the alliance was founded and the allies clearly have managed to accommodate them over the years. Other differences are new, the product of shifting power balances, changing economic circumstances, and generational successions on both sides of the Atlantic. Taken together, these factors have created a crisis of confidence in the ability of the alliance to meet the security requirements of the NATO members in the 1980's.

After identifying some of these sources of differing approaches to East-West relations, the report looks at these perceptual differences in terms of public opinion, discussing what appear to be some current American and European misconceptions about each other.¹

¹ Generalizations about "European" and "American" points of view never do full justice to reality. In this report, such generalizations are intended to capture the predominant perspectives of either side of the Atlantic. Important exceptions to generalizations are noted.

Finally, the report suggests some alternative implications for the Alliance of the current trends in attitudes toward East-West relations, alternative futures for the alliance, and options for the Congress. The question is whether, under today's conditions, the Alliance will be able to accommodate United States and European differences in a way that rehabilitates NATO's role as the coordinating mechanism for Western defense and for Western cooperation with the Soviet Union and its East European allies.

SOURCES OF DIFFERING ATTITUDES

There is an air of crisis across the Atlantic. We accuse the Europeans of harboring anti-American thoughts and of risking "self-Finlandization." Europeans assert that the United States has turned into an irrational ally with a fascination for military power whose follies could drag Europe into an unnecessary and devastating war. The specific issues that have provided the opportunities for these mutual recriminations include the uneven Western response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian hostage situation, NATO's decision to deploy new long-range theater nuclear weapons, the failure of the SALT II Treaty, and the Polish crisis.

There has been a tendency, in attempting to explain these differences, to treat them as aberrations, the product of inconsistent policies, leadership failures, or a result of insufficient will and determination. But while such factors undoubtedly have been signposts along the road into the current crisis, the roots go much deeper.

As an international group of experts observed early in 1981, "It would be dangerously erroneous in particular to believe that once the international situation quiets down, the difficulties between Europe and America will simply disappear. They find their roots in deeper, historical and structural trends."² Any new "consensus" which fails to acknowledge that there are fundamental differences between American and European outlooks on East-West relations will be doomed to obsolescence before it is incorporated in NATO communiqués or blessed by summit declarations.

What follows is an examination of some of the fundamental sources of United States and European differences over East-West relations. This brief discussion is followed by an analysis of how these sources have been reflected in public opinion surveys and how they have influenced recent issues which have divided the allies.

GEOGRAPHY: WE ARE HERE, AND THEY ARE THERE

Perhaps the most basic differences between European and American approaches to East-West relations can be traced, at least in part, to the fact that the Atlantic Ocean and many miles separate the United States from Europe, while Western Europe occupies the same land mass as the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. It is less than 1,000 air miles from Moscow to Berlin, about the same distance between Washington and New Orleans. It is approximately the same distance from Moscow to Paris or London as it is from New York to Denver. But Washington is almost 5,000 miles from Moscow.

² Kaiser, Karl; Lord, Winston; de Montbrial, Thierry; and Watt, David. *Western Security: What has changed? What should be done?* Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. (New York) 1981, p. 11.

Many Americans ask why Europeans, much closer to the Soviet Union, appear far less concerned about the "Soviet threat." The shorthand answer, "We are here and they are there," identifies the puzzle but does not resolve it. Proximity to Soviet military power should lead to greater concern, according to the logic of the American question. But it clearly does not, suggesting that even in this day of instantaneous communications and space travel, the Atlantic Ocean divides us more than it unites us.

The fact is that Western Europe's proximity to Soviet power makes Europeans particularly concerned about the consequences of war, and therefore particularly determined to avoid them. For Americans, the European "theater" can be separated, at least intellectually, from their homeland; for Europeans, the homeland is the potential battlefield. As a result, we have traditionally placed different emphases on deterrence versus war-fighting capabilities, on conventional versus nuclear weapons, and on arms control versus defense improvements.

These geographically-based differences asserted themselves strongly in 1981. One of the principal themes of the anti-nuclear movement in Europe was that the United States was moving toward a nuclear war-fighting posture in Europe, and that the installation of new long-range theater nuclear weapons was evidence of that tendency. This charge was set against the enunciation by the Carter administration of a more flexible nuclear employment strategy (PD-59) in 1980 and the decision of the Reagan administration to construct (but not deploy) enhanced radiation warheads—the "neutron bomb." The final proof for many Europeans of American willingness to contemplate "limited" nuclear war in Europe came on October 16 when President Reagan remarked that he "could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button."

In fact, the President's remark was intellectually logical and consistent with accepted NATO policy. The problem is that no policy can resolve the simple fact created by geography. Alliance unity depends on a "one-for-all and all-for-one" philosophy, and alliance cohesion has been maintained on this basis in the form of a policy of deterrence. Deterrence aims to prevent events ever coming to the point where geographic reality would assert itself. But deterrence rests on a necessarily-ambiguous foundation, and the margin for uncertainty has increased in parallel with the growth in the Soviet Union's military capabilities.

Geography also creates political and psychological barriers between the United States and the European allies. Europeans have both national and regional identities. For Americans, the national and regional identity is one in the same. The East-West demarcation in Europe, imposed by the outcome of World War II and preserved by the installation of authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe, cuts across the regional identity without removing it from either East or West European nations. Because the United States does not, and probably cannot, fully share this identification, we place different values on some of the fruits of détente, for example, increases in human contacts.

At the same time, the Soviet Union is able to assert its place as a European nation; which, at least from the geographical perspective, is

a point in common with Western Europe. When geography is married with history, the "European" identity as opposed to the "American" identity takes on special meaning. As one observer has noted, "Nobody in Europe, West or East, imagines that war means only fighting overseas. For all Europeans, the question of war is the question of survival, not just of superiority."³

But geography is a complex factor. What explains the fact that the Canadians, in the same relative geographic position as the United States, display some very "European" traits when it comes to defense efforts and arms control? With regard to defense spending, the Canadians do not even do as well as some of the European countries that are popularly reputed to be most infected by détente. In the Canadian case, the reason (or excuse) for not doing more may be the geographic proximity to the American defense guarantee. In other words, Canada relies on the fact that the United States must regard Canada's defense as vital to its own security.

HISTORY HAS TAUGHT US DIFFERENT LESSONS

It is an objective fact that the United States and Europe have passed through dramatically different historical experiences and naturally have drawn somewhat different lessons from those experiences.

Europeans have hosted two devastating wars in the last 65 years. Most continental European countries, at one time or another in this century, have been defeated and occupied by foreign forces. From a European perspective, the desire to avoid war remains an immediate and meaningful imperative.

Americans also want to avoid war. But no major hostilities have been fought on American soil since our Civil War, 120 years ago. The United States emerged from both world wars "victorious," suffering neither occupation nor the ravages of war on its territory. The most popular American historical perspective on the First and Second World Wars is that the United States was forced to join the hostilities because Europe had not been able to deal with the threat to peace. In other words, appeasement of the antagonistic power is regarded as the greatest danger for the West.

Fritz Stern, an American historian, has described the effects of these differing experiences with war in the following terms:

... the Europeans cherish a different historic memory from ours. To Europeans the increase in overkill capacity is an irrational act, an absurdity: they know that we have enough to kill and be killed a hundred times over again. *Their* historic experience in this century—unlike America's until Vietnam—has not been the triumphant use of power but the experience of brute and futile power, blindly spent and blindly worshipped. Even an unhistorical generation in Europe remembers World War I as the epitome of the mindless worship of force; they remember the guardians of morality sanctifying violence. For the Europeans, this century has been the experience of the absurd, first as an intuition of artists, then as drama produced by history. Having lost their pre-eminence in repeated wars, the Europeans today seek alternatives to force.⁴

Many Americans would say that European nations, in seeking alternatives to the use of force, have opted out of responsibility to their

³ Lewis, Flora. "How Europe Thinks of War," *The New York Times*, June 8, 1981, p. A15.

⁴ Stern, Fritz. "A Shift of Mood in Europe," *The New York Times*, September 2, 1981, p. A27.

citizens as well as to their alliances. The European starting point in East-West relations appears to be the possible, rather than the desirable. History, on the other hand, has left us with an expectation of unlimited possibilities—a theme that undoubtedly helped Ronald Reagan capture of the White House from Jimmy Carter who, in the eyes of many Americans, came to symbolize limits on the possible.

The United States emerged from the Second World War wearing a "white hat." We had come to the rescue of democracy and freedom and had provided the additional force needed to defeat fascism. After the war, we saw ourselves as the main barrier to the spread of communism. Our involvement in Vietnam called into question our moral posture. Many Americans, as well as friends overseas, questioned whether the United States had become the aggressor in its Southeast Asian anti-Communist undertaking. But now we, as a nation, apparently have reassessed our guilt feelings derived from the Vietnam experience and have concluded that we went too far in abjuring our world role.

An even longer-term factor reinforces the American tendency to seek the desirable rather than to work within limits. This country matured with one frontier after another to cross and with a record of sustained accomplishment and growth. We had for the first one hundred and sixty years of our nationhood seemingly unlimited resources to call on to support our national objectives. Now we have entered an era in which at least some resources are seen as truly limited. But the American psychology still inclines us to reach beyond our grasp and to regard limits as new frontiers to be crossed rather than as boundaries to be observed. Thus, in our competition with the Soviet Union, we are inclined to push beyond limits that our West European allies find more judicious to accept.

Our scorn of the ways of the "old world" is also well-engrained in our national history. As Louis J. Halle has reminded us,

We have to recall that the American nation had its beginnings in the seventeenth century, as a nation of refugees from the tyrannies, the persecutions, and the power-politics of the Old World. . . .

In our American mythology, the refugees and their children had established in their God-given land a new and entirely different kind of society in which all men were free and equal, in which all men were brothers, in which the wicked devices of the Old World . . . were happily unknown. . . .

Not only had God given us a virgin continent, replete with all goods, on which to establish our society, he had given us the great oceans to protect it. Part of our American mythology, then, was that we were beyond the reach of the wicked.⁵

Europeans, including Russians, were, of course, never beyond the "reach of the wicked." And, in another marriage of geography and history, West Europeans generally view Russian behavior as conditioned by the numerous times that marauding armies have marched across Russia's naturally-exposed frontiers. Americans tend to see the Soviet Union as an expansionist power attempting to spread communism across the world. Europeans, on the other hand, tend to see Russia in an historical context as driven by fear and insecurity. This does not necessarily make the Soviet Union less dangerous in West European eyes. But it does make West European governments, and particularly

⁵ Halle, Louis J. *The Cold War as History*. Harper and Row, Publishers (New York), 1967, pp. 12-13.

West Germany, reluctant to take steps that will reinforce Russian inclinations to substitute military strength for political legitimacy and economic performance.

Debates between Americans and Europeans over East-West relations inevitably draw on historical analogies. As with most historical analogies, those used in this debate can be turned to favor either side of the argument. Stanley Hoffmann has called this the "game of historical analogies."⁶ As Hoffmann points out, both Europeans and Americans hark back to the beginning of the First World War to prove the validity of their current approaches to the Soviet Union. Americans compare Soviet Russia and Imperial Germany while Europeans compare the competing alliances of today with those of 1914. Hoffmann describes the scenario:

To the Europeans, Washington's view of 1914 suggests that war is the only way to curb Moscow, just as it was the only way to cut down German expansionism. To the Americans, the Europeans' view of 1914 means that—as in the Thirties—they are in effect willing to appease Moscow's expansionism. . . . To the Americans, if the Europeans failed to react strongly to as clearcut an aggression as the recent one [Afghanistan], what are the chances of their standing up in cases that may well be more ambiguous. . . . To the Europeans, if Americans overreact in this instance, aren't they going to push the Soviets onto a collision course that could still be averted by a wider policy?

One measure commonly applied to analysis of differing United States and European attitudes toward East-West relations has been the (false) dichotomy between "red or dead." However limited this image might be for explaining attitudes toward the Soviet Union, the fact is that there is a greater inclination in Europe to accept the "red" branch of the dichotomy than there is in the United States. It may well be that differing historical experiences (as well as varying ideological heritages) help explain the contrast.⁷

Most European countries have, at one time or another, been occupied by foreign powers or subjugated by domestic authoritarian regimes. Their current political freedom and relative economic well-being tells Europeans that a condition of occupation or subjugation is not necessarily permanent; that resistance and recovery are possible. Death is quite permanent.

Americans have experienced neither authoritarian subjugation nor foreign occupation, and find the prospect essentially unthinkable. This contrast in historical experiences undoubtedly does not explain completely the differing attitudes; but neither do the verbal missiles exchanged across the Atlantic about fidelity to the common goals of the Alliance.

Finally, one exception must be taken to this generalized discussion of historical sources of differences between United States and European perceptions. The exception is England. The United Kingdom's experience in the two world wars of this century has created a perspective distinct from, but perhaps in fact a blend of, the American and the continental European attitudes. The British share to some degree the continental anxiety about war—Britain suffered heavily from manpower losses in World War I and from bombardment in World War

⁶ Hoffmann, Stanley. "The Crisis in the West", *New York Review of Books*, July 17, 1980, p. 44.

⁷ See discussion of public opinion on the "red or dead" dichotomy on p. 26.

II. But the United Kingdom, like the United States, emerged from both wars victorious, never having been occupied. The British attitude therefore reflects a combination of "American" and "European" orientations.

IDEOLOGY: A MIXED HERITAGE

Americans and Europeans are united in their desire to protect individual rights, to defend their democratic political systems, and to sustain equitable and strong social and economic systems. Common ideological objectives are in fact explicitly expressed in the NATO Treaty. The Parties pledge in the preamble "to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." Further, in Article 2, they pledge to strengthen their "free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded . . ." and to "seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies" and "encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them."

But, in spite of a wide area of shared ideological commitments, there are fundamental differences between the European and American ideological experiences—differences which directly affect perceptions of the Soviet Union and which lead to conflicting American and European policy preferences.

The Marxist critique of capitalism has deep historical and political roots in Europe. A number of European countries have large Communist parties. Many Europeans regard Marxist ideals as a source of inspiration, even if they reject the systems that have been spawned by the Russian revolution. All European countries have important Socialist or Social Democratic parties, all of which support intervention of the government in the social and economic realm to allocate more equitably the costs and benefits of life within the country. In the major European allies, such programs are so thoroughly a part of the fabric of society that even conservative parties in government are unable to contemplate the type of cuts in social programs that the Reagan Administration is currently implementing in the United States.

The Marxist critique of capitalism has virtually no roots in the United States. The Democratic Party could by no stretch of the imagination be described as having a socialist program by European standards. The very term "socialism" still attracts a visceral negative reaction in the United States. Even though the United States has over the years developed extensive social programs, they were adopted and developed within a pragmatic rather than an ideological framework. And, the first year of the Reagan Administration has suggested that, without a firm basis in national ideology, costly social programs are particularly vulnerable at a time of intensified fiscal and economic pressure.

The question is to what extent the differing ideological experiences affect approaches to East-West relations. While the effect is in no way quantifiable, it seems clear that the Soviet Union and its system are regarded as more threatening by Americans than by many Europeans in part because of our differing ideological prisms. To Americans, the Soviet Union embodies the primary external ideological challenge to

the American system. Because the threat is predominantly an external one, the confrontation between the two systems is generally seen as occurring in other countries, in Europe and in the Third World. U.S. information programs explicitly recognize the importance of the internal balance sheet of the American system for our foreign and defense posture. But the measure of our success in the competition usually is the acceptance by other countries of Communist or Western Democratic/capitalist systems of government and economy.

The perspective from Europe is somewhat different. The ideology that motivates the Soviet system is unacceptable to the vast majority of West Europeans—even many West European Communists. But because many West European countries, and West Germany in particular, are on the front line of the ideological competition with the Communist nations, they regard the effectiveness of their social and economic systems as a principal weapon in that ideological competition. Germany's Ambassador to NATO, Hans Georg Wieck, addressing an international conference on East-West relations in May 1981, reminded his listeners that the political threat to the West involves all elements of society, and that Western nations need cohesive answers to social and economic problems as well as to military challenges.⁸ He reiterated German Defense Minister Hans Apel's comment that ideas move freely between tanks, from East to West as well as from West to East. With an East German neighbor sustaining a strong economic performance, West Germany cannot be insensitive to the economic and social aspects of the East-West competition. Social and economic health are regarded by Germany's leaders as an integral part of the country's security posture. Therefore, tradeoffs between defense spending and social programs pose more difficult choices for Germany than for most other countries.

Finally, there is a West-West as well as an East-West ideological dimension. European perceptions of the American system vitally affect the willingness of European governments to follow American prescriptions for East-West relations.

The United States was at one time held up as a model of Western society and government by many West Europeans. Now, many West Europeans perceive their system of society and government as superior to that of the United States. As one commentator has observed, "American political and social institutions fascinated Europeans in the 1940's and 1950's, because they seemed innovative and successful, while European institutions had failed. This is no longer so."⁹

The Vietnam war, and to a lesser extent, Watergate scandals, undoubtedly contributed to this change in perceptions, undermining American moral authority in European eyes. America's economic difficulties and decline in relative military power also contributed to this change.

Europe still has its own problems, problems which have become more severe in the economic recession of recent months. But it is notable that a victorious Socialist party in France has had sufficient

⁸ Wieck, Hans Georg. "Western Security and East-West Relations," speech presented to conference entitled "Toward a New East-West Balance," Knokke-Zoute, Belgium, May 9, 1981.

⁹ Pfaff, William. "Reflections, Finlandization," *The New Yorker*, September 1, 1980, p. 34.

confidence in its own ideological answers for French society to include Communist ministers in the government, initiate far-reaching social reforms, and at the same time join the United States in harsh criticism of Soviet behavior. Previous French governments have been afflicted by excessive paranoia about American domination, and have been driven to acts designed to "prove" French independence. This French Government appears to have taken French independence as a starting point for, rather than as an objective of, policy.

Similarly, the recent inclination of the West Germans to establish an independent bilateral dialogue with the Soviet Union undoubtedly grows out of a somewhat greater confidence in Germany's ability to define and pursue its national objectives. It may be excessive to describe the new German approach as Germanic Gaullism, but the German-Soviet agreement to consult regularly on the progress of United States-Soviet arms control negotiations is certainly an assertion of national prerogatives.

Perhaps the signs from both Bonn and Paris support the contention of William Pfaff, an American journalist, that "Europe is not weak, and is not fated to dependence on either of the superpowers."¹⁰ But what we are discussing here is evolution and not revolution. The apparently increasing European confidence in home-grown ideologies and institutions is some distance from making Europe co-equal with the superpowers or independent of the vital American contribution to European security. For most Europeans, the diminished faith in American ideological leadership stops far short of rejection of alliance and cooperation with the United States.

DEMOGRAPHY: A CHANGING AMERICAN PROFILE

The United States was settled and populated for the most of its history by Europeans. This country has long acknowledged and cherished its cultural links to and common heritage with Europe, particularly to England but to the continental nations as well. We tried throughout most of the 19th century and into the 20th century to remain distant from European intrigues and power balances. But two world wars in this century raised questions about whether American interests could be protected through an isolationist approach. The foreign and defense policies of the United States have been "Eurocentric" since World War II not only because Europe was the fulcrum of the world power balance but also because our leaders have generally perceived a wide area of shared interests with West European democracies as well as a need to preserve peace and stability in Europe.

The demographic links between the United States and Europe remain strong. But current trends are slowly but surely working against traditional patterns. Immigration trends have reduced in relative terms the European contribution to the American melting pot and increased the Latin American and Asian contribution. While it is impossible to draw scientific linkages between this trend and American policy interests, it seems likely that, over time, these trends could influence the American concept of its interests in Europe.

¹⁰ Pfaff, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

Already there are signs of change. As Pfaff has written, "Today, we are far more conscious of our non-European sources and our non-European quality; less homogeneous in our national culture; more preoccupied with our own national life."¹¹ Furthermore, the current mood in the United States leads some analysts to translate these trends into policy recommendations. A commentary in the *Wall Street Journal*, recommending that the United States withdraw from NATO, questions whether Europe and the United States are "inextricably" linked by history and culture. It goes on to argue that the United States should reorient its political, and military interests toward the Pacific:

The vast Pacific Basin lies at America's other shore. It too has many cultures that are influencing America. The United States is absorbing a great immigration. Few of these immigrants are any longer from Europe. The vast bulk are from Mexico, Central America, East and Southeast Asia, not Europe.¹²

Such thinking could be a temporary aberration, a product of the current frictions between the United States and Europe; or, it could be a sign of things to come. In any case, the underlying fact cannot be denied: the United States is acquiring more diverse demographic roots.

Finally, there is also an interesting marriage between demographic factors and geography that already produces differing American and European approaches to East-West relations. For those in Western Europe who have relatives or friends in Eastern Europe the prospect of better access to those countries is very attractive. Most Europeans are close enough to Eastern Europe to be able to take advantage of liberalized access to the East European countries. For a West German, the opportunity to visit an aunt, uncle, cousin or grandparent in East Germany is a real gain in the quality of life.

Those in the United States with ethnic ties to East European nationals benefit less from liberalized access because of the greater distance and cost involved in taking advantage of this opportunity. It is no wonder, therefore, that improved access to Eastern Europe, which was one of the major accomplishments of détente in the 1970's, is appreciated far more in Europe than in the United States.

GLOBAL VERSUS REGIONAL ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

It is a simple fact that the United States is a global power with global military capabilities while the European nations are, with the exception of France and to a lesser extent Great Britain, regional powers with military capabilities limited to Europe. It was not always so, and the reversal of world roles has had much to do with disagreements between the United States and Europe concerning how best to deal with the Soviet challenge in the Third World.

Slowly but surely following World War II, European nations retreated from extensive Third World military involvement. The international consensus favoring the process of decolonization was the prime political factor behind Europe's withdrawal; the economic impetus was provided by Europe's need to reconstruct its devastated in-

¹¹ Pfaff, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹² Nairn, Ronald C. "Should the U.S. Pull Out of NATO?" *The Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1981, p. 30.

dustrial capacity and its desire to concentrate resources on economic recovery and the process of regional economic integration. France retained a military intervention capability in Africa and an impressive naval presence in the Indian Ocean. But, for the most part, Europe's ability to influence global events with military forces became quite limited. The United States attempted to fill vacuums left by the European withdrawal.¹³

The decline in Europe's ability to influence events in the Third World was accompanied by an evolving strategic approach to Third World problems. European policies became increasingly dependent on political and economic instruments to influence events in the Third World. The American experience in Vietnam confirmed for many Europeans their skepticism regarding the current utility of military force in the Third World. And, the fact that the former colonial powers have retained or re-established close ties with their former colonies based in many cases primarily on the strength of political, economic, cultural and linguistic linkages has reinforced the faith of our allies in these policy tools.

Today, European nations do not reject completely the importance of global Western military capabilities. Great Britain and France both made contributions to the Western naval presence in the Persian Gulf region in response to the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. But our allies remain much more skeptical than are we concerning whether military intervention necessarily guarantees anything in the long term in the Third World, either for the United States or for the Soviet Union. The 1980 British White Paper on defense—the product of a Conservative government—states the European perspective quite clearly:

The best answer is to try to remove the sources of regional instability which create opportunities for outside intervention. In some circumstances, military measures will not be appropriate at all; in others they may form only one component of the total response. *Diplomacy, development aid and trade policies will usually have a greater contribution to make.* [emphasis added]

West European leaders, for the most part, take the position that the West derives considerable security from the needs of Third World countries for access to Western markets and technology. They also believe that similar Soviet requirements for Western technology and other Western goods, such as wheat, tend to constrain Soviet temptations to intervene in Third World trouble spots. Many Europeans fear what they see as an American tendency to concentrate too narrowly on military responses to potential Soviet aggression, believing that other approaches might be more productive and less costly in terms of Western interests. They are at least equally—if not more—interested in developing economic ties and political bonds that will both ensure cooperative relations with Third World nations and discourage Soviet adventurism.

Furthermore, Europe has gained far more in tangible benefits than has the United States from the period of détente with the Soviet

¹³ For a discussion of European involvement in the Third World see: Sloan, Stanley R. "Sources of potential collateral support for U.S. objectives," in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Soviet Policy and United States Response in the Third World* prepared by the Congressional Research Service, U.S. GPO, (Washington) March 1981, pp. 241-270.

Union. This fact makes Europeans more inclined to see détente as "divisible" i.e., to want to protect the gains of détente in Europe even if the Soviet Union misbehaves in the Third World (such as in Afghanistan). The United States, carrying the majority of Western global military burdens, has a much greater interest in treating détente as "indivisible," with Soviet actions outside of Europe seen as providing cause for Western responses within the European framework.

Does military weakness generate faith in economic and political instruments of national purpose? To what extent do U.S. global military capabilities permit the West European allies to concentrate on non-military approaches? Does military strength generate an inclination to use force to further national objectives? Perhaps these questions frame the proposition too dramatically. But it nonetheless seems clear that differing world roles and military capabilities constitute another important source of divergent European and American approaches to East-West relations.

ECONOMIC FACTORS, A CONTINUING SOURCE OF DISAGREEMENT

It is a popular American belief that European attitudes toward East-West relations are driven to a significant degree by avarice—a taste for the fruits of expanded trade with the East. It is a popular European retort that American practice does not match its rhetoric when real American economic interests are called into question, i.e., grain sales to the Soviet Union. These images have been reinforced by the debate over economic sanctions in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and again following the declaration of martial law in Poland. Americans draw the conclusion that Western Europe already is too dependent on trade with the East and therefore is increasingly hostage to Soviet political objectives. Europeans conclude that the United States wants Europe to pay the price for sanctions made-in-the-USA.

It is a fact that trade between Eastern and Western Europe grew rapidly in the last decade. But as a percentage of total trade, trade with Communist countries has remained fairly constant in recent years. Since 1976, some 4.5 percent of the annual global imports of European NATO countries has come from Communist countries. Exports to Communist countries have in fact declined as a share of global exports. In 1976, European NATO countries sent 5.4 percent of their exports to Communist nations; in 1979, the share was only 4.6 percent.

It is also a fact that the United States trades far less with Communist countries than do the European allies. In 1979, Communist nations accounted for only 1.2 percent of U.S. imports. U.S. exports to Communist countries accounted for only 4.1 percent of its total exports. The differing ratios of trade with the East do not appear particularly significant on the surface.¹⁴ Significance, however, grows out of the content of that trade and the differing expectations about the importance of the further development of trade with the East for future economic growth in the West.

¹⁴ See trade data in table I.

TABLE 1.—TRADE OF NATO WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES,¹ 1976-79

[In millions of dollars]

Country/area	1976			1977			1978			1979		
	Total from (or to) entire world	From (or to) Communist countries	Trade with Communist countries as percent of world trade	Total from (or to) entire world	From (or to) Communist countries	Trade with Communist countries as percent of world trade	Total from (or to) entire world	From (or to) Communist countries	Trade with Communist countries as percent of world trade	Total from (or to) entire world	From (or to) Communist countries	Trade with Communist countries as percent of world trade
IMPORTS (C.I.F.)												
European NATO.....	367,599.3	16,420.7	4.5	414,190.7	18,063.9	4.4	484,604.5	20,997.6	4.3	630,222.0	28,464.1	4.5
Canada (f.o.b.).....	37,958.6	341.8	.9	35,542.2	303.5	.8	43,554.7	338.1	.8	53,518.0	491.2	.9
United States (f.o.b.).....	121,794.6	1,069.2	.9	146,704.0	1,338.1	.9	173,249.9	1,833.4	1.1	207,131.1	2,464.8	1.2
Total, NATO.....	527,352.5	17,831.7	3.4	602,436.9	19,705.5	3.3	701,409.1	23,169.1	3.3	890,871.1	31,420.1	3.5
EXPORTS (F.O.B.)												
European NATO.....	338,042.3	18,305.9	5.4	392,809.0	19,303.8	4.9	473,862.0	22,799.3	4.8	593,544.1	26,999.0	4.6
Canada.....	38,633.2	1,248.5	3.2	41,558.5	1,067.4	2.6	46,147.6	1,406.7	3.1	55,931.6	1,717.8	3.1
United States.....	114,992.4	2,535.9	3.2	121,242.4	2,716.1	2.2	143,662.7	4,501.1	3.1	181,801.6	7,407.5	4.1
Total, NATO.....	491,667.9	21,090.3	4.1	555,612.9	23,087.3	4.2	663,672.3	28,707.1	4.3	831,277.3	36,124.3	4.4

¹ Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, U.S.S.R., China, and Cuba.

The United States imports very little from Communist countries that it could not easily do without or get elsewhere. Its exports to Communist countries have included items, such as grain, that are of great importance to the East Europeans and the Soviet Union. Western Europe exports items of great value to Communist countries, particularly in industrial and high technology areas. But West European imports from Communist countries include some components vital to current and future European economic growth—natural gas for example. And so, on balance, Europe does have more to lose than does the United States from disruption of trade with the East.

Furthermore, relative United States and European dependence on foreign trade plays a role, particularly in terms of expectations concerning the future importance of that trade. European nations continue to depend much more heavily than does the United States on trade as a basic factor of economic well-being. Western markets now are saturated and highly competitive. West European industries are operating below capacity. One of the most attractive and natural possibilities for future trade expansion is with Eastern Europe.

Two issues within the Alliance provide focus for this point: the Polish debt question and plans for a new Soviet gas pipeline to Western Europe. In the Polish debt case, many Americans feel that Poland should be declared in default of its international financial obligations. From their point of view, such action would injure both the Polish martial law government and the Soviet Union and would clearly signal disapproval of martial law in Poland. The costs to the United States would be minimal. On the other hand, the burden of default would fall most heavily on West European banks and governments—most particularly in West Germany. Not unnaturally, West Europeans find many costs and few benefits in the default approach.

Similarly, many Americans believe that completion of the Soviet-West European gas pipeline would increase Soviet leverage over Western Europe. They therefore believe that the pipeline deal should be stopped. From the West European perspective, however, there is sufficient protection against increased Soviet political leverage and, in any case, Europe needs the job that the project would produce in the near term and the energy that the pipeline would bring in the future. At a time when many Europeans believe that American deficits and high interest rates are prolonging their economic recession, American pressure against the pipeline is seen as unreasonable.

Economic factors do, therefore, contribute to differing United States and European perspectives on East-West relations. The United States clearly is not heavily dependent on trade with the East, nor does it count on growth in that trade as a vital element of U.S. economic growth. West European trade with the East involves mutual dependencies, and whether the ultimate balance favors East or West is a matter for debate. The risks look worth taking to many Europeans, who also see trade as an important component of foreign policy, a source of Western leverage in the East. The cost/benefit relationship does not look nearly as favorable from an American perspective.

EVERY NATION A SPECIAL CASE

In addition to the general sources of differing perceptions identified in the preceding pages, there are special national cases, some of which have already been suggested. These special national circumstances can,

in a given case, be the principal source of differences with U.S. approaches to East-West issues.

In particular, West Germany's approach is very much a product of the division of the German nation, the vulnerability of Berlin, and the limits (legal and psychological) on Germany's military capabilities. Given these special circumstances, a policy of strict confrontation with the East would entail far higher costs—in terms of security as well as economic and life-style costs—than for the United States.

The Polish crisis has highlighted the continuing importance of the post-World War II agreements which split Germany into two parts (a split which was intended at the time to be a temporary arrangement). At Yalta, the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain divided Germany into occupation zones which, with the advent of the cold war, became a *de facto* partition of Germany into Eastern and Western halves. This arrangement is one with which most of Europe has become very comfortable. If some Americans have forgotten the troubles created by a strong and aggressive Germany in the first half of this century, most Europeans have not. Even many Germans are wary of the destabilizing potential of German reunification.

Under such circumstances, Europeans may be understandably concerned about upsetting a European balance which has helped ensure peace for over thirty years. Columnist Joseph Harsch has observed that American cheers for Polish resistance to martial law make some Europeans nervous, writing that Europeans "are not ready to risk the destabilization of Europe to rescue the Poles."¹⁵

For Germany, being at the center of East-West relations means its national destiny remains largely in the hands of external forces. This has been given for West Germany's foreign and defense policy in the entire post-war period. Professor Alfred Grosser points out that West Germany "is the only Western country that still depends heavily on the international structures of 1944-45."¹⁶ These "international structures" impose on Germany the strong influence of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. It is therefore little surprise that German policy reflects to varying degrees sensitivity to the desires and interests of *all* of these countries. It is also not surprising that West German policy seldom pleases all of them equally, or that West Germany should from time to time appear frustrated with the practical limits on its sovereignty.

It also remains a fact, however, that for Germany there are no practical short-term alternatives to its current situation. Evolutionary developments might buy Bonn greater leeway to make some autonomous decisions in security policy, but very few Germans seek a radical change in West Germany's currently uncomfortable but relatively stable position between East and West.

France has traditionally defined a special role for itself in East-West relations. In the days of American strategic supremacy and unquestioned global leadership, France felt compelled to assert its independence both politically and militarily. Even though France acknowledged Germany's special position, French Governments tradi-

¹⁵ Harsch, Joseph C., "Yalta and the view from Germany," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 8, 1981, p. 22.

¹⁶ Grosser, Alfred, "Western Europe," in *The United States in the 1980's*, Peter Dulignan and Alvin Rabushka (eds.) Stanford, 1980, p. 713.

tionally claimed the role of Europe's unfettered leader in relations with the East.

Now that Germany's policy has become more assertive and less dependent on U.S. guidance, France has moved back toward an Eastern policy which is far more critical of the Soviet Union. This shift in the French role derives in part from the change of leadership in France, but also seems unmistakably linked as well to changes in the global power balance and to the more nationalistic Ostpolitik pursued by Bonn.

The United Kingdom's approach to East-West relations is a product of a number of conflicting pressures. As a leading member of the European Community, the U.K. remains torn between the continent and its Atlantic connections. Still declining as a military power, the U.K. nonetheless clings at great expense to its nuclear deterrent capability. A tradition of military power is counterposed against strong pacifist and unilateralist tendencies in British society. These conflicting pressures are reflected in British politics. The current Conservative government prefers a particularly hard line toward the Soviet Union. At the same time, the leadership of the main opposition, Labour, generally favors de-emphasis of military programs and expanded cooperation with the East.

In some alliance nations—speaking in particular about the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway—pacifist sentiments have deep emotional and historical roots. In their extreme form these sentiments translate into outright opposition to membership in NATO. At a minimum, governments in these countries are obliged to lobby for arms control, nuclear disarmaments, and détente. The concentration on "peace" initiatives often conflicts with American concepts of the requirements for Western security and with American suspicion of Soviet motivations.

One American observer, Walter Laqueur, has popularized the term "Hollanditis" to describe what he sees as a growing tendency in Europe to try to escape some of the consequences of the East-West conflict.¹⁷ Laqueur notes that "Neutrality (or neutralism) has been the traditional orientation of Dutch foreign policy for almost three centuries—as it has been of most of the other smaller European countries." He argues that today the neutralist tradition is being revived and that Holland and other European countries want to "keep out of world problems" and to avoid spending money on defense.

Laqueur's choice of terminology, of course, outraged many Dutch officials, whose perspective on their own approach to Western security might be reflected in the words of a leading Dutch defense expert and Socialist party whip in the Dutch parliament, Klaas de Vries:

Many Europeans regard the American insistence that the Alliance must substantially increase its defense efforts in view of the ever-growing and all-consuming nature of the Soviet threat as an unbalanced approach to security. Europeans continue to devote considerable sums to defense, but popular support for current defense policies is dependent on retaining the dual emphasis of NATO's defense and détente policies. Public opinion will not support policies which concentrate solely on building up military capabilities as a means to ensuring security.¹⁸

¹⁷ Laqueur, Walter. "Hollanditis: A New Stage in European Neutralism," *Commentary*, August 1981, p. 19.

¹⁸ de Vries, Klaas. "Security Policy and Arms Control: A European Perspective." Paper prepared for the conference sponsored by the Arms Control Association, Washington, D.C., on "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Modernization and Limitations," held in Brussels, 20–22 September 1981.

In the south of Europe, special circumstances also condition attitudes toward East-West relations. In Italy, the fact that the Italian Communist Party is more-or-less the permanent opposition to the Italian Government, has tended perhaps to make the non-Communist parties more anti-Soviet and pro-American than they might be if the Italian political system were dominated by competition and alternation between strong Christian Democratic and Social Democratic parties. The Italian political environment is also affected by the fact that the Italian Communist Party, striving to be recognized as a legitimate contender for a role in government, has, on occasion, been highly critical of the Soviet Union—the Polish crisis has provided the latest opportunity for a split between the PCI and Moscow.

The attitudes of Greece and Turkey are conditioned by their mutual antagonism. Both see each other as a more imminent threat than the Soviet Union, and this fact colors their attitudes toward the threat in general and toward defense cooperation in the southern region.

PUBLIC OPINION: A MIRROR OF DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

In the West European democracies as well as in the United States, foreign and defense policies are formulated with substantial regard to public opinion. Thousands of West European demonstrators have marched and rallied to protest nuclear weapons. American observers, in response, have warned that unless the allies "get their act together" the American taxpayer will no longer be willing to support the U.S. commitment to European defense.

Public opinion can be measured "scientifically" through modern, sophisticated polling techniques and technologies. But measurement and assessment of public attitudes on any issue is a complex undertaking. Public opinion is dynamic, not static. Politicians can "lead" public opinion—it is seldom a "given" that is immutable in any democratic political system. Events can produce distortions or dramatic shifts in public opinion. These shifts can persist if they are supported by long-term political, sociological, or economic trends. Or, they can be temporary, subject to modification with succeeding events or policy changes. Furthermore, the media can affect public opinion. The recurrence of headlines, the repetition of themes in print, on television or radio or in memorable cartoons, whether based on accurate assessments or not, can swing the public mood and perceptions.

CURRENT MISPERCEPTIONS

In 1981, all of these factors came into play in public attitudes toward United States-European relations. In Europe, much of the media and certain leaders of the anti-nuclear movement painted the picture of a United States gone wild, bound and determined to confront the Soviet Union, led by a reckless cowboy with six-guns at the ready. (The "peace offensive" launched by Soviet leader Brezhnev at the 26th Party Congress in February 1981 has sought to play on this image, contrasting it with Soviet initiatives in the area of arms control and disarmament.) In the United States, corresponding images characterized Europeans as weak-willed pacifists, duped by Soviet propaganda, manipulated by the KGB, and ready to unfurl the flag of surrender at the first sign of trouble.

If these popular images were accurate characterizations of American and European approaches to security issues, there would be no point in contemplating the future of the alliance: it would have none. The fact that these images are overdrawn caricatures, however, should not lead one to conclude that they are unrelated to the problems cur-

rently facing the alliance. The continuation of the alliance clearly depends on some level of popular consensus in NATO nations that the benefits of alliance justify the costs. The answer to two questions raised by currently-popular images may help determine whether the consensus can be rebuilt or is permanently flawed. The first question is whether the anti-nuclear movement which grew so dramatically in 1981 signifies that Europeans are increasingly anti-American, pacifist, and neutralist. The second is whether it is true that Americans are bent on confrontation with the Soviet Union and have cast détente and arms control aside.

TRENDS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

First, what are the trends in European attitudes toward the United States and the Alliance? The United States International Communication Agency (USICA) has conducted extensive polls over the years to gauge European public opinion on these issues. Two ICA analysts published in September 1981 their assessment of current European attitudes, set against a wealth of historical data.¹⁹ Their findings, summarized below, are not entirely consistent with the headlines:

On the Soviet threat: "Only a limited minority (one in five in Britain, fewer elsewhere) were 'very' concerned about either a Soviet attack or political intimidation."

On the current military balance: "While surveys conducted during the 1970s show a tendency for West Europeans, especially in Britain and Germany, to believe that the balance of military power was shifting to the U.S.S.R., March 1981 data suggest that this trend has been halted."

On the preferred military balance: "... many West Europeans not only *perceive* (by pluralities in most cases) military equality, but most clearly *prefer* it to American superiority. They are concerned that an imbalance could heat up the arms race, make negotiations more difficult, and tempt the inferior power to consider a first strike."

Support for NATO: "... West Europeans still support NATO. Large majorities except in France, which belongs only to the political side of NATO, favor continued membership." Support is "widespread and reasonably stable."

Neutrality as an option: After warning that "Neutralism is hard to define" and noting that majorities in most European countries would prefer to "stay out of conflict or war", the authors report ICA's attempt to get at "hard-core" neutralist sentiment in March 1981. ICA asked Europeans: "All things considered, do you think it is better for our country to belong to NATO, the Western defense alliance, or would it be better for us to get out of NATO and become a neutral country." Their results supported the conclusion that neutralist sentiments *are not* widespread, except in France. (In France, where the neutral option ran even with the NATO option, opinions undoubtedly reflect France's half-in and half-out NATO involvement.)

Better red than dead: Based on West German data, the authors conclude that "While many West Germans are willing to see a conventional defense of their country against any attack, they are clearly unwilling, and have been for some time, to see a nuclear defense of their soil." They observe that "If these findings do not represent a feeling of 'better red than dead,' they do suggest a feeling of 'better red than incinerated.'"

Increased defense spending: There is an apparent inconsistency between European preference for a conventional defense and their apparent resistance to proposals for increased defense spending which would be required if NATO were to rely more on conventional than nuclear weapons. Most Europeans would prefer to keep defense spending at current levels, and there is precious little support for increased spending. Perhaps the apparent inconsistency can be explained in

¹⁹ Adler, Kenneth and Wertman, Douglas, "Is NATO in Trouble? A Survey of European Attitudes," Public Opinion, August/September 1981. Pp. 813, 50.

part by the fact that many West Europeans "do not feel particularly threatened by the Soviet Union." The authors suggest that other factors may include economic problems and opposition to cuts in social services, a feeling in smaller countries that increased efforts on their part make very little difference, and a preference for arms control efforts to enhance security.

Deployment of new theater nuclear weapons: Surveys in the last two years have consistently found strong opposition to the stationing of new ground launched cruise or extended-range Pershing II missiles on European soil. Levels of opposition to stationing of new long range systems are consistently and considerably higher than any indications of anti-Americanism, neutralism, or pacificism, suggesting that there are many pro-Americans, pro-NATO, pro-defense Europeans who nonetheless object to the new systems.

The conclusion of the ICA authors is that "NATO as a formal organization is not in trouble among the mass publics, at least not yet." Europeans want a strong but not overwhelmingly armed America; they welcome strong U.S. leadership in the world. They remain, for the most part, committed to the Alliance. At the same time, they do not believe that the nature of the threat warrants dramatic increases in defense spending. And, they look for evidence that the United States is making a genuine attempt to reduce tensions and negotiate arms control agreements with the Soviet Union.

More recent polls have tended to reinforce the general picture painted by the ICA data. For example, the West German Allensbach Opinion Poll Institute reported in October 1981 that their most recent data showed that 59 percent of those Germans questioned would regret an American withdrawal from Europe while only 17 percent would welcome it. Furthermore, when asked whether they "liked" Americans or not, 56 percent said that they liked Americans while only 18 percent answered "not particularly."²⁰ In sum, the public opinion indicators do not support the headlines which proclaim that neutralism and anti-Americanism are spreading like wildfire across Western Europe.²¹

There is, however, an important footnote. The ICA data do reveal a somewhat divergent set of attitudes on the part of what has now become popularly known as the "successor generation." Particularly on the choice between neutrality or NATO, many more respondents in the "university-educated 18-34" age group choose neutrality than in the "35-49" or the "50 and older" groups. Even among the young group, NATO wins a significant majority. But the trend, however slight, suggests that time and events have been eroding NATO's political base.

The challenge for American policy makers who want to ensure the future of the alliance is to adopt policies which respond to today's security problems and which have sufficient credibility to attract the support of future generations of Europeans. The danger of headlines and policy proclamations which incorrectly portray the state of European public opinion is that they could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Europeans who support NATO and are favorably inclined toward Americans cannot reasonably be called "anti-American

²⁰ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 30, 1981, p. 11. (As reported by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Western Europe, November 2, 1981, p. J3.)

²¹ In some respects, the current period is reminiscent of the mid-1970's when it was popular with journalists and even with former high level officials, such as Henry Kissinger, to proclaim that Eurocommunism was spreading across Western Europe when such assertions were not supported by the most political and sociological indicators in Europe.

neutralists or pacifists" because they march against nuclear weapons. If American policy should be seen as equating anti-nuclear sentiment with anti-Americanism or neutralism, some of these Europeans might decide that their anti-nuclear position is inconsistent with their other attitudes toward the alliance. On the other hand, other Europeans may decide that the United States, by defining anti-nuclear attitudes as anti-American, has dismissed their concerns and is no longer taking European interests into account. Under these circumstances, it is entirely possible that the United States will lose more friends than it gains supporters of new nuclear deployments.

Second, how accurate is the European image of Americans as determined cold warriors bent on confrontation with the Soviet Union? As in the case of American perceptions of European attitudes, this image is seriously flawed. Public opinion data on U.S. attitudes do support the contention that Americans favor rebuilding American military strength. When asked in mid-1981 whether "we must build up our military strength so that we are clearly No. 1 and use this strength whenever necessary for our national interests, even if other nations complain," 73 percent of those participating in the poll agreed, while only 22 percent disagreed.²² This and similar results in recent polls is perhaps the main support for the European image of an excessive American propensity to depend on military force to guarantee national interests.

But other results of the same poll qualified this image. Of those questioned, 65 percent favored reopening strategic arms talks with the Soviet Union, while only 25 percent opposed. And, on related issues, 47 percent opposed *keeping* military advisers in El Salvador while 35 percent were in favor. On the question of whether the United States should give economic and military support to anti-Communist allies even if they violate human rights, 67 percent opposed such aid while only 23 percent were in favor. These data do not support the image of Americans as adventurous or willing to take risks or make substantial commitments based on a single-minded anti-Communist obsession.

Furthermore, an ABC News/Washington Post poll in June 1981 found Americans in substantial agreement with European citizens on a vitally-important issue. When asked "Do you think that the United States should seek military superiority over the Soviet Union or should the United States reach some agreement with the Soviet Union that would leave both countries as equal as possible in military strength?", 65 percent opted for arms control and equality. Only 31 percent said that the United States should seek military superiority without attempting to negotiate overall military parity.²³

In sum, recently-popular European images of Americans find some basis in fact but draw as well on large doses of fantasy. There *is* strong support in the United States for efforts to rebuild American military capabilities. Many Americans would feel more comfortable

²² *Time Magazine*, June 1, 1981, p. 12.

²³ Alderman, Jeffrey D., ABC News/Washington Post Poll, conducted May 18-20, 1981, aired June 8, 1981. (The fact that the response to this question apparently conflicts with the support in the previously-cited poll for military superiority appears to reaffirm that the manner in which a question is asked and the way that the poll sample is constructed can affect the outcome. This response does not appear out of line, however, when considered in relationship to the combination of the answers in the previous poll to the questions about military superiority and arms control.)

if the United States were superior to the Soviet Union. But, at least in some polls, most Americans would be willing to live with a condition of overall parity. An overwhelming majority of Americans want the United States to try to negotiate arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Americans would support the use of military force when vital American interests are threatened, but there is a strong residue of opposition to any military involvement that even vaguely resembles the start of "another Vietnam."

European policy makers who care about the future of the Alliance should therefore weigh carefully statements which tend to support faulty impressions of American attitudes. If Americans are continually confronted by incorrect portrayals of what they think and stand for, they will find it increasingly difficult to sustain a sense of identity with Europeans and with the purposes of alliance.

Perhaps a better awareness of some of the factors discussed in the first section of this paper would help both Americans and Europeans understand that divergent perspectives are not the product of malicious intent or irrational reactions. They derive from profound and, to some extent, immutable factors over which leaders on either side of the Atlantic have little control. The question is whether the differences that do exist can still be accommodated within the framework of the Atlantic alliance or whether the Alliance no longer effectively provides an acceptable balance of costs and benefits to both the United States and the allies. This issue is discussed in the concluding sections of this study.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE

ALTERNATIVE ANALYSES OF THE CRISIS

How serious is the crisis? It is a fact that the history of NATO is filled with a succession of crises—each successfully overcome. Is this but the latest which also will be overcome? Or, is this crisis so qualitatively different from previous challenges to the cohesion of NATO that it signals a watershed and calls for (or threatens) revolutionary policy changes?

A NEW AND PROFOUND CRISIS

A number of analysts argue that NATO has outlived its usefulness. Irving Kristol, a leading conservative writer, was making this argument long before the crisis assumed its current proportions. Addressing a conference in Brussels marking the 30th anniversary of the alliance in 1979, Kristol judged that "after an initial decade of quite vigorous existence, NATO has ceased to be a living reality for some years now. I also anticipate that, sometime in the not too distant future, the appropriate formal funeral services will occur."²⁴

Other observers have joined Kristol in his analysis. Ronald Nairn, a West Coast businessman and journalist, has written that "The time has come for the United States to sever its ties with NATO."²⁵ Nairn argues that the United States gains little from the alliance with Western Europe, and that withdrawal is justified "simply in the pursuit of America's long-term strategic interests, taking account of any other realistic, attainable options. For Nairn, these "attainable options" include refocusing American economic and security interests on the Pacific basin.

Other analysts argue that it is useless to continue to try to fortify NATO's conventional defenses and that current NATO strategy runs counter to American interests. The author Laurence W. Beilenson and nuclear physicist Samuel T. Cohen have recently argued that:

To remain so entangled is to invite a Soviet nuclear strike against the United States in any war that starts in Europe—to risk our national survival. We can survive without the Western alliance, even if the Europeans elect to accommodate to the Soviet Union rather than provide for their own defense. But nuclear war can kill us.²⁶

Even a number of analysts who do not reject the centrality of NATO to American security interests judge that the current crisis is some-

²⁴ Kristol, Irving. "Does NATO Exist?" Paper prepared for the Conference sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies on NATO: The Second Thirty Years, held in Brussels, September 1-3, 1979.

²⁵ Nairn, Ronald. "Should the U.S. Pull Out of NATO?" *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1981.

²⁶ Beilenson, Laurence W., and Cohen, Samuel T., "A New Nuclear Strategy," *New York Times Magazine*, January 24, 1982, pp. 42, 44.

thing special and dangerous. Professor Simon Serfaty has judged that "there is something new in the 1982 model of the Atlantic crisis":²⁷

Now, the tedious issues of the past are no longer pressuring the structures of the alliance one at a time and under conditions of overwhelming U.S. military superiority, economic affluence and over-all ideological compatibility. Instead, they are all being felt at the same time under circumstances of economic crisis, military insufficiencies and ideological differences.

Henry Kissinger agrees. He argues that the NATO allies have been avoiding difficult decisions for a decade and now face an accumulation of inconsistencies in alliance policies and postures. According to the former Secretary of State, the alliance "does not have a common philosophy or a common platform from which to resist Soviet blandishments or the pressures from its own constituents. To pretend otherwise only guarantees the acceleration of the current deterioration."²⁸

American critics of the alliance who see the problems as originating largely in Europe have their counterparts in Europe. While the majority of Europeans still support NATO as do most policy-level officials and experts, some European observers see American and European interests as increasingly divergent, justifying a rethinking of the alliance. Unacceptable American attitudes toward East-West relations, conflict in the Third World, and required defense efforts are generally offered as the case for a more independent European policy—a mirror image of the American complaints.

THE LATEST OF A SERIES OF CRISES

A number of analysts would nonetheless argue that the current crisis may have its unique features, but so have past crises. For these analysts, the new differences must be accommodated but the determining factors remain those which have not changed. The Atlantic alliance, according to this view, remains the only credible framework for maintaining East-West military stability in Europe and for cooperative relationships among governments in the Atlantic area. Perhaps most importantly, they argue, no other framework provides a "home" for the Federal Republic of Germany which is compatible with both Eastern and Western security interests.

Former State Department official Anton DePorte summarizes the case for continuity in the following terms:

The European state system developed by the cold war and completed by the arming of Germany in 1955 remains intact today. It will continue to be challenged by developments in the years to come, as it has been in the past. These challenges will have to contend against the hard factors which have maintained the structural stability of the European state system against the many serious challenges of the last quarter-century . . . The Western Europeans are likely to want to maintain a visible and structured alliance with the United States—in fact, the Atlantic alliance we have—to provide them with security. The United States, for its part, will almost certainly continue to play its established role in the Euratlantic subsystem.

The ties of alliance will be reinforced by common interests of other kinds, not least by the understanding of the member states that they have no real alternative to maintaining an effective and cooperative economic system among them.²⁹

²⁷ Serfaty, Simon, "The Atlantic Crisis—I," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 12, 1982, p. 7.

²⁸ Kissinger, Henry, "Something Is Deeply Wrong in the Atlantic Alliance," *Washington Post*, December 21, 1981, p. 21.

²⁹ DePorte, A. W., *Europe and the Superpower Balance*, Headline Series 247, published by the Foreign Policy Association, December 1979, p. 75.

Based on this judgment about the vital importance of the factors of continuity, other analysts have responded to those who claim that today's crisis requires a revolution in the organization of Western security. Robert G. Livingston, former head of the German Marshall Fund, emphasizes the importance of the alliance for internal Western stability:

NATO was conceived to provide security not only against a Russia that is aggressive but also against a Germany that once was aggressive in the past. Together with the European Economic Community, the Alliance constitutes a framework within which German talents and energies turn to constructive and cooperative use. . . .

Pique and petulance about allies who are stronger but also less deferential than they used to be should not tempt us into threats that could shatter a structure that serves our defense and the peace of Europe in many ways, including some that we seem to have forgotten.³⁰

Another observer has warned that we may be "talking ourselves into breaking up the alliance." Journalist Morton Kondracke argues that, on both sides of the Atlantic, we are "maximizing the differences between partners, picking at scabs, ignoring the vital interests we have in common. . . . Intellectuals and op-ed writers ought not try to write off the alliance before its time. Those now engaged in doing so may detest the Soviet Union, but they are doing Moscow's work."³¹

In any case, it seems clear that there is a crisis in the alliance. The basic difference among analysts seems to be whether or not the current sources of friction outweigh the traditional sources of alliance cohesion. Contending perspectives on this question may well frame the debate over how to resolve the crisis.

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR THE ALLIANCE

Talking about "alternative" futures for the alliance could give the impression that the United States can "choose" among various futures for NATO. That impression, of course, would be misleading. American policies can be designed with certain objectives in mind, but there is no guarantee that those objectives can be attained. In the increasingly interactive global environment, every action produces numerous reactions. Predicting what those reactions will be is problematic at best. In the case of European security, the future will be determined not only by our policy choices but also by those of our West European allies, the Soviet Union and its allies, China, and, to an increased extent, those Third World countries that control vital natural resources.

Even in such an uncertain policy environment, however, coherent American policies must be set against some concept of objectives. Traditional American policies toward the Western alliance have sought to maintain the basic structure of United States-European coordination of defense efforts and policies toward the East, including arms control policies. They have also sought to expand the areas of political and economic cooperation among the allies as a supplement to military security measures. In addition, while American administrations long ago abandoned the objective of European defense

³⁰ Livingston, Robert G., "Punish Our Allies?", *The Washington Post*, January 3, 1982, p. C8.

³¹ Kondracke, Morton M., "Talking Ourselves Into Breaking Up the Alliance?", *The Wall Street Journal*, January 7, 1982, p. 21.

autonomy as a realistic near term objective, U.S. administrations and the Congress have nonetheless continued to urge the Europeans to increase their defense efforts relative to those of the United States. It is this general approach which now has been called into question once again by critics of the alliance.

What are the theoretical alternative futures for the alliance, and what are some of the arguments for and against those futures? The following list suggests the range of futures that might be imagined as possible in the next 20 years, with a few comments about the arguments concerning whether each is desirable or feasible.³²

REASSERTION OF AMERICAN PREEMINENCE

This future suggests a requirement for reestablishment of U.S. military superiority, including nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union; clear economic and political preeminence in relations with the European allies; and the ability to influence positively the policies of third world raw material producers.

Desirability/feasibility

—In terms of the U.S. ability to achieve its national objectives this future probably would be most advantageous; it would provide substantial policy flexibility, and would ensure a substantial margin of military security.

—Whether or not this would be within the realm of the possible is another question. The attempt to obtain military superiority over the Soviet Union probably would require economic sacrifices that would weaken the United States in other ways. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the Soviet Union would sit idly by while the United States strove for superiority. And, there is reason to doubt whether the American economy could become as strong and invulnerable to outside influences as this future would require.

CONTINUITY

This future suggests more or less the same approach to the alliance as has become traditional for American administrations. It is, in some ways, a "muddle through" approach, encouraging evolution within alliance structures to accommodate changes in the international environment but avoiding sudden or destabilizing shifts in the overall framework.

Desirability/feasibility

—This approach has been responsible, at least in part, for peace in Europe for over 30 years. It has also helped to ensure stability within Western Europe, a significant departure from European politics in the first half of this century.

—On the other hand, given the decline of American military power relative to the Soviet Union and the relative increase in West European economic and political influence and confidence, the current set

³² This list of theoretical futures assumes no major hostilities in Europe in this time period. It also assumes that the Warsaw Pact will remain more-or-less intact and that arms control agreements in the next few years are unable to remove the sources of East-West tension.

of alliance relationships includes many frustrations for the United States.

—The substantial American commitment to European defense makes it more difficult for the United States to deal with threats to Western interests in other parts of the world.

—In terms of feasibility, if the United States decides that the benefits of the current alliance framework still outweigh the costs, the current approach undoubtedly can be sustained into the future, particularly if alliance structures remain sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing international circumstances.

REARRANGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS

This suggests various changes in alliance relationships which go beyond the type of evolutionary development that has characterized the last thirty years. A number of theoretical futures fit into this category:

a. *Independent Europe, allied to the United States.*—In such an arrangement, Western Europe would assume most of the burden for its own defense through coordinated foreign policy and defense planning—including nuclear cooperation—in some sort of European defense community. This more autonomous Western Europe would remain on close and friendly terms with the United States.

Desirability/feasibility

—In the early postwar years, this future clearly was viewed as highly desirable. American overseas commitments could be reduced and a united Europe would provide a framework for internal West European stability as well as for an acceptable military balance in central Europe.

—In exchange for a reduction in American commitments, the United States inevitably would lose a degree of influence over West European security policies as well as over East-West security relations. How much influence would be lost is a subject for speculation.

—This future has not been realized for a number of reasons. Even though Western Europe has been a zone of peace since World War II, traditional national rivalries and differences have been subordinated but have not disappeared. A sense of European unity and the institutions to reflect that sense have developed very slowly, and the process only now is beginning to produce vague outlines of common foreign policy.

The prospects for a European defense community remain complicated by issues of nuclear sharing, particularly the role of West Germany in the control of nuclear weapons. And so, current political circumstances would suggest considerable difficulty in moving quickly from the current alliance framework to this alternative future.

b. *Independent Europe, tending toward neutralism.*—In this theoretical future, Western Europe would move to defense autonomy but would do so in the context of worsened relations with the United States. Western Europe would constitute an independent "third force" balancing its policies between those of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Desirability/feasibility

—Some analysts have argued that it would make no significant difference to American interests if Western Europe were to move in this

direction. This apparently remains a minority perspective. Most analysts would judge that, in such a future, the United States would be less able to influence the course of international events and would be less secure than it is today.

—The practical obstacles to the formation of such a united West European defense/foreign policy community in this alternative future are similar to those suggested in the "allied-to-U.S." variant, but perhaps even more difficult for the Europeans. The costs of establishing a credible "third force" posture would be immense. It consequently seems likely that an independent but neutral Europe would come about only in the context of serious policy differences and emotional controversies with the United States. It is an open question whether the alliance has now entered a period in which such an outcome has become more likely.

c. Fragmented Europe, susceptible to Soviet pressure.—Another potential future, following American disengagement from an active role in European defense, could find Europe fragmented, unable to organize a coherent defense/foreign policy community, unable to control internal tensions, and increasingly dependent on the good will of the Soviet Union for its security guarantee. Such a future could presumably include varying degrees of West European dependence on the Soviet Union, with West Germany being the most susceptible to Soviet influence given the diversion of the German nation and the vulnerability of Berlin.

Desirability/feasibility

—Again, some analysts argue that the United States could survive and, indeed, prosper, in such an environment. Most analysts, however, would likely judge this future as including serious disadvantages for American interests. The balance of global power might well tilt dramatically toward the Soviet Union and internal West European tensions could increase the potential for war or for Soviet intervention to prevent war.

—West European nations certainly do not regard such a future as desirable, and so there would be strenuous efforts to avoid fragmentation. But without the United States playing a pivotal role in the European balance, the outcome would remain largely in the hands of the West Europeans and the Soviet Union. In other words, such an outcome is more feasible under current political conditions in the absence of an American role.

d. Fragmented Europe, subordinated to Soviet interests.—In this potential future, the West European countries would be in more-or-less the same status as the East European countries—technically independent but for practical purposes dependent on the good will of the Soviet Union for their future security. Whether or not this condition were formalized by the stationing of Soviet troops or through bilateral cooperation and non-aggression agreements, the West European countries would in most decisions about security policy act deferentially toward Soviet interests.

Desirability/feasibility

—Some analysts have gone so far as to suggest that should the Soviet Union invade and conquer Western Europe it would suffer a "bad case of indigestion." And, in the case of Soviet domination of Western Europe, Moscow would face even more trouble controlling an unwieldy empire than it does now with Eastern Europe. They conse-

quently dismiss the potential "loss" of Western Europe as not central to American interests. This minority perspective notwithstanding, most analysts believe that Soviet control of Western Europe would amount to a clear loss of power and influence for the United States and would directly threaten the security and economic well-being of this country.

—It is hard to imagine the Soviet Union obtaining this degree of influence or control over Western Europe without resistance from within Western Europe. In other words, we probably would not arrive at this potential future without passing through at least limited conflict in Western Europe, following an American withdrawal, between pro-Moscow elements and pro-Western forces. While this potential future is perhaps the most costly in terms of U.S. power and influence, it may also be the most unlikely.

MAJOR VARIABLES AND UNCERTAINTIES

In sum, it seems highly unlikely, no matter what policy objectives the United States selects, that the alliance will move in the near term either toward a reassertion of American preponderance or, on the other extreme, fragmentation of Western Europe and subordination to the Soviet Union. The more likely range of possibilities lies somewhere in between.

Continuity with traditional American approaches to the alliance does not promise an early end to the expensive U.S. troop presence in Europe or an end to the frustrating process of coordinating policies with recalcitrant allies. Continuity does, however, narrow the range of uncertainty about the future and perhaps contains fewer risks than other alternative futures. But if one concludes that the alliance is not central to American interests, an evolutionary approach may fail adequately to protect U.S. interests in the future.

Any break with traditional American approaches to the alliance promises more uncertainties than does an evolutionary approach to the alliance. The formation of a "United Europe" would, in theory, relieve the United States of some difficult burdens. U.S. policy since World War II has encouraged European integration without trying to force the pace of the process. Would "shock treatment" finally convince the Europeans to overcome all the traditional obstacles to greater unity? How can the shock treatment be applied without stimulating European unity on terms that are potentially unfavorable to U.S. interests—in other words, a united but neutral Western Europe? Even if the Europeans decided that, in principle, they wanted to organize an independent defense in alliance with the United States, could they do it?

How great is the risk that the European nations, left more-or-less to organize their own defense, would be driven apart and into the arms of the Soviet Union? Are the benefits of disengagement from European defense worth the potential risks of this or other potential consequences?

There are no certain answers to any of these questions. The answers ultimately lie in the realm of subjective judgment, and each analyst, official, Senator and Representative must ultimately make his or her own best bet. The next pages discuss in particular how these issues may be presented to the Congress for consideration, debate, and, perhaps, judgment.

OPTIONS FOR THE CONGRESS

SOURCES OF CONGRESSIONAL INFLUENCE AND POWER

The Congress has always played an influential role concerning the U.S. commitment to European defense. On June 11, 1948, the United States Senate passed the so-called Vandenberg Resolution which recommended "the association of the United States by constitutional process, with such regional and other collective arrangements as are based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid. . ." This act paved the way for negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty. The Congress was directly involved in the negotiations, influenced a number of issues concerning the scope of alliance commitments, and the Senate consented to the treaty in 1949.

Since that time, the Congress has maintained its involvement in a number of ways. Most importantly, perhaps, it has made crucial decisions throughout the period affecting the size, equipment, and readiness of U.S. forces committed to NATO. Since the late 1950's, Congress has also considered from time-to-time the larger question of whether or not the American commitment to NATO was appropriate in changing international circumstances.

In particular, between 1966 and 1974 the Senate was urged on a number of occasions to consider a withdrawal of U.S. forces from NATO. The leader of the movement to withdraw was former Senator Mike Mansfield. Senator Mansfield's first withdrawal proposal was presented in 1966, but not until 1971 did he present his resolution in a form that required up or down votes in the Senate. The last "Mansfield amendment" was voted down in 1973, suffering the fate of similar initiatives in previous years.

Senator Mansfield's efforts were based on his judgment that the economic health and political maturity of the West European allies combined with the blossoming of East-West détente made the U.S. presence unnecessary. He was joined in this assessment, and on votes in the Senate, largely by liberal Democratic members. The Mansfield amendments were defeated by coalitions of moderate to conservative Republicans and Democrats.³³

In the last decade, the Congress has used a number of legislative devices to affect the relative U.S. share of NATO burdens or to encourage specific adjustments in the U.S. commitment.³⁴ Some notable examples include:

—*Jackson-Nunn Amendment*. In this amendment to the DOD Authorization Act, 1974, the Congress required that the European allies offset the balance of pay-

³³ For a detailed history of the Mansfield proposals see the CRS report by Charles R. Gellner entitled "The Mansfield Proposals to Reduce U.S. Troops in Western Europe, 1967-1973," June 25, 1980.

³⁴ For a discussion of burden sharing history and issues see IB 81067, "Defense Burden Sharing: U.S. Relations with NATO Allies and Japan," [by Stanley R. Sloan] Congressional Research Service.

ments deficit incurred by the United States as a result of the 1974 costs of stationing U.S. forces in NATO Europe. Failure to offset would have resulted in automatic reductions in U.S. force levels. On June 2, 1975, President Ford reported that the deficit had been more than fully offset and that the troop reduction provisions of the Jackson-Nunn amendment would not have to be implemented.

—*DOD Authorization Act, 1975.* In an amendment to this act, the Congress required that U.S. support forces in Europe be cut by 18,000 men, authorizing the Secretary of Defense to increase combat personnel in Europe by an equal number.

—*Levin Amendment.* In an amendment to the DOD Authorization Act, 1981, the Congress required that the Secretary of Defense report on allied progress toward meeting the 3 percent spending objective, to describe cost-sharing arrangements within NATO and with Japan, and to explain efforts being undertaken to "equalize" the sharing of defense burdens with NATO allies and Japan. The provision also expressed the sense of Congress that the President should seek increased support from host nations for the cost of maintaining U.S. forces there.

—*Eagleton amendment.* During floor debate on the fiscal year 1982 DOD procurement authorization bill, Senator Eagleton proposed an amendment which would have required cutting U.S. force levels or monies expended in NATO countries which failed to meet the objective of 3 percent real increases in defense expenditures in 1982. A similar provision would have applied to Japan. In both cases, the President could waive the requirement by certifying in writing to the Congress that such waiver was warranted by potential adverse effects on U.S. national security. The Senator withdrew the amendment following floor discussion during which Senator Tower, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, assured that the committee would continue to monitor closely European and Japanese defense efforts.

The Congress today retains the ability to shape the U.S. commitment to NATO. Its influence can be applied most directly through the DOD authorization and appropriation process, or in trade-related or foreign assistance legislation. In addition, the Congress can use hearings, reports, the media, and a number of informal channels to influence U.S. policy in this area.

Congressional decisions on some current issues in East-West relations could, in the extreme, encourage profound changes in the Western alliance. Complex political and economic linkages make it impossible to isolate the alliance from U.S. policy decisions regarding Poland or the Soviet Union. For example, congressional moves either to precipitate a Polish default or to stop the West European-Soviet gas pipeline could bring the current crisis of confidence within NATO to a head. The outcome could be toward re-establishment of NATO unity along lines preferred by the United States. Or, the outcome could lead to the further disintegration of the alliance. Policy choices on these issues therefore relate in the long term to congressional judgments about the importance of the alliance. But, even given the profound importance of these issues, the most direct decisions the Congress makes concerning the future of the alliance relate to U.S. troops in Europe.

MAJOR OPTIONS REGARDING U.S. TROOPS IN EUROPE

Many members of Congress once again are seriously questioning the wisdom of the current U.S. commitment to NATO. This sentiment, which was largely quiescent throughout most of the 1970's, has been revived by the issues discussed earlier in this report, particularly the disagreements with the European allies over the appropriate balance between defense and détente policies in relations with the East.

What options are available to the Congress under current circumstances? With regard to U.S. troops in Europe—the main source of

congressional influence over policy—the Congress has three general options. The Congress can either support maintaining current levels, mandate a gradual withdrawal from Europe, or require a rapid withdrawal. (An increased U.S. commitment is not currently being proposed.)

MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVELS

This congressional option is compatible with the "continuity" future for the alliance discussed earlier in this report. A congressional decision to continue to support approximately the same levels of U.S. commitment to the alliance would, relative to the other options, minimize uncertainties in alliance and East-West relations. This option would also leave open the possibility for negotiated United States-Soviet conventional force reductions.³⁵ It would, however, not relieve the dilemmas confronting the United States concerning how to meet new defense commitments elsewhere in the world. This option certainly would not preclude traditional efforts to "get the allies to do more" or even to gradually shift some defense responsibilities from the United States to the allies. But it would constitute a signal to the allies and the East and the United States intends to continue to play a central role in the European security equation.

GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL

This option would deliver a somewhat different signal. A congressional mandate to begin a phased withdrawal from Europe would represent a judgment that U.S. national interests are not expected to require a decisive U.S. role in European security by 1990. This approach would allow the United States to reallocate gradually its defense resources to other priorities, although the amounts that could be reallocated clearly would depend on the phasing of the withdrawal. If the troops which are withdrawn are not disbanded, then very little in the way of economies could be expected. This policy approach would open the way to the possible "rearrangement" options discussed earlier in this paper. All the uncertainties concerning these potential futures would gradually come into play as a result of this option.

RAPID WITHDRAWAL

A decision by the Congress to mandate rapid withdrawal of American forces from Europe would be a revolutionary change in U.S. policy toward the alliance. It would accelerate the process which would be played out over many more years in a gradual approach to withdrawal. The Europeans would be faced immediately with all the difficult choices concerning European unity, nuclear cooperation, accommodation with the Soviet Union, and so forth. In this option, the United States presumably could realize major economies if withdrawn troops are demobilized or would have considerable flexibility in reallocating defense resources to strategic programs or to commitments elsewhere on the globe. Any prospect for negotiated force reductions in

³⁵ For a discussion of recent developments in this area, see: "Warsaw Pact Proposes New Draft Treaty in Vienna Force Reduction Talks," Congressional Research Service Policy Alert (by Stanley R. Sloan), February 25, 1982.

Europe would be foregone; whether or not the Soviet Union would respond by making unilateral reductions of its own in Eastern Europe remains unknown.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

In conclusion, none of the options for Congress include any solid guarantees about the future. Even continuity with past policies contains a mixture of certainty and uncertainty. If the United States should decide to withdraw forces from Europe, the net gain or loss for American security would be determined in part by what we decided to do with the assets that are freed for other uses. But our balance sheet would also be determined in large part by the subsequent decisions of our allies and adversaries. It is theoretically possible that U.S. withdrawal would lead to a more united Europe allied to the United States, a stable, more peaceful European continent, and to a net increase for American national security. On the other hand, it could lead to an independent but neutral Europe, a fragmented Europe greatly influenced by the Soviet Union, or Soviet domination of the entire continent.

Given the vital importance of these choices to the nation and the world, Congress undoubtedly will want to examine with great care the nature of the current relationship with the allies, the overall East-West framework, and the advantages and disadvantages of the various possible futures for the alliance. Ultimate decisions on the issue of the U.S. commitment to NATO will by necessity be subjective and framed by doubt, but a clear sense of objectives and priorities would at least help narrow the range of uncertainty.

